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Plant Health
Inspection
Service

**Wildlife
Services**

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WILDLIFE SERVICES—HAWAII

Contact Information:

For Assistance:

Mike E. Pitzler, Hawaii, Guam, and Pacific Islands

Wildlife Services State Director

3375 Koapaka Street, Ste. H420

Honolulu, HI 96819

Phone: (808) 861-8575 FAX: (808) 861-8570

Toll-Free Number 1-866-4USDAWS 1-866-487-3297

E-mail: mike.e.pitzler@aphis.usda.gov

For Research:

William Pitt, Field Station Leader

National Wildlife Research Center - Hilo Field Station

P.O. Box 10880

Hilo, HI 96720

Phone: (808) 961-4482 FAX: (808) 961-4776

E-mail: will.pitt@aphis.usda.gov

Web site: www.aphis.usda.gov/ws

USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Hawaii

Every day, Hawaii residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Wildlife Services (WS) for help in protecting agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, and property from damage or threats posed by wildlife. WS' professional wildlife biologists respond to these requests with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

The program is involved in reducing wildlife damage to agriculture, native forests, endangered species, game species, and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by Hawaii WS include, protecting endangered plants from rodents, feral sheep and goats, protecting endangered birds and native seabird nesting colonies from predation by rodents and other introduced predators, conducting sampling and monitoring for West Nile virus; conducting control of invasive species such as coqui and green house frogs, protecting corn seed research crops from bird depredations, controlling feral pigs and deer from damaging crops, and managing wildlife hazards to aviation at civil airports and military airfields.

Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. WS also



provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

Protecting Air Travelers—From 1990 to 2002, Hawaii's airports ranked 15th in the total number of reported wildlife strikes in the U.S. The severity of the problem has prompted airfield managers to rely on WS' expertise to conduct ecological studies to identify hazards and determine the best strategies to manage wildlife problems at all major State airports. WS also provides wildlife hazard management at several commercial airports and military airfields on Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, Hawaii, and Maui. WS has successfully reduced wildlife strikes at airfields where it conducts daily control operations. In addition to this direct assistance work, WS has conducted wildlife hazard assessments (ecological studies) at all the major airports in Hawaii to identify and develop plans to reduce hazards to aviation and the traveling public. WS maintains a wildlife strike database and reports all collisions with civil and commercial aircraft occurring in Hawaii to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Protecting Corn Seed Research Crops—Research on corn has been an important part of Hawaiian agriculture since the end of major sugarcane production. Hawaii's tropical climate provides opportunities for U.S. seed companies and independent researchers to continue studies during fall and winter months. WS has assisted corn seed researchers in protecting seedlings from depredation caused

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting civil and military aircraft from collisions with wildlife
- Managing damage on seed research crops caused by introduced game birds
- Protecting endangered plants and native ecosystems from damage from introduced feral goats, sheep, pigs and cattle
- Reducing predation on endangered Hawaiian water bird populations and native seabird colonies.
- Developing strategies and methods for the control of invasive species such as the Caribbean tree frogs and brown tree snake

Top 4 WS Research Projects of Interest to Hawaii:

- Improving rat damage management methods in macadamia orchards
- Developing control methods for brown tree snakes and other invasive species such as the coqui frog
- Identifying the best bait or attractant to use in traps used to control the introduced small Indian mongoose and the feral cat
- Developing a repellent to protect corn seedlings from game bird depredations

by introduced game birds such as gray and black francolins. Farm managers rely on WS expertise in reducing depredations where public hunting is not feasible.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species—The Pacific Islands have many unique plants and animals that are threatened with extinction. In fact, Hawaii has the highest number of endangered species in the nation. WS protects endangered waterbirds at national wildlife refuges, state sanctuaries, and wetland sites on military lands from introduced predators such as the small Indian mongoose. In situations where feral goats, sheep, pigs, and deer impact endangered plants and public hunting is not feasible, WS works closely with state, federal and private organizations to remove the animals that are causing damage. WS also assists in the protection of the endangered Oahu elepaio, a flycatcher, from predation by rats.

Protecting Seabird Nesting Colonies—Seabird presence within the Hawaiian Island archipelago is a vital aspect of a well balance marine ecosystem. Hawaiian fisheries depend heavily on this resource to locate schooling fish. Due to urban expansion on the major Hawaiian islands, suitable seabird nesting habitat has been drastically reduced and segmented from historic ranges. It is a well-known fact that most seabird nesting activities occur on islets off the coasts of the major islands, mainly due to lack of predators and human activity. WS assists other federal and State agencies that manage small parcels of suitable nesting habitat with wildlife damage management projects involving the removal of avian and small mammalian predators from natural area reserves and seabird sanctuaries. The resounding success of these projects can be observed by the annual increase in nesting colonial seabirds and fledgling success rates.

West Nile Virus Disease Monitoring—Hawaii is one of the few states that are deemed free of West Nile Virus (WNV). While this disease is fatal to humans, it is a larger threat to wild and domestic bird populations. The disease can have a major negative impact on endangered bird populations that occur nowhere else in the world. It can also impact the local poultry industry which is a minor agricultural commodity in the State. WS is currently cooperating with the State of Hawaii's Department of Health and the U.S. Geological Survey by providing live-captured birds off of various airports and providing them to USGS veterinarians for blood extraction and screening as part of the WNV surveillance program. The birds are live-trapped and removed off of airports to avoid wildlife-aircraft collisions. To date, there has been no positive identification of WNV in the State.

Major Cooperators

- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Navy, COMNAVMAR
- U.S. Air Force, Andersen Air Force Base
- U.S. Department of Interior - Office of Insular Affairs
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Government of Guam, Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources
- Guam Power Authority
- Port Authority of Guam
- Guam International Airport Authority
- Thirty-one privately-owned freight forwarding companies

Looking to the Future

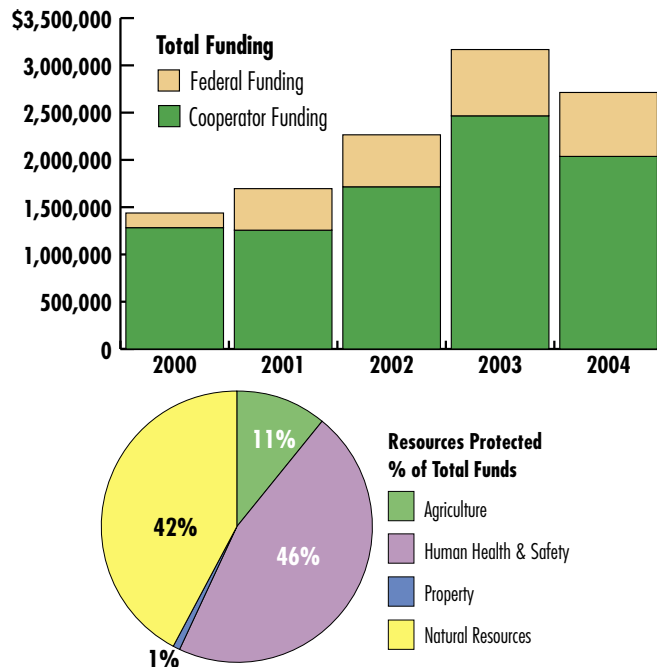
WS continues to develop a strong cooperative program by improving its services to state airports. A WS airport operations manual specifically for Hawaii is being developed by local staff biologists and field supervisors. The objective is to standardize data collection, reports and as well as some operations to provide better coordination and continuity between WS airport operations within the state. Wildlife Hazard Assessments (ecological studies) have been completed for all major airports in Hawaii and reports are being finalized with recommendations to the airports to improve wildlife threat reduction plans.

In FY 2005 WS in Hawaii will update all National Environmental Policy Act environmental analyses of program actions for all non-Federal cooperators. As required by WS national policy the public involvement into these analyses will be above that required by NEPA.

WS program to prevent brown tree snakes from arriving in Hawaii and being spread throughout the Pacific Basin via military and civilian transportation networks is threatened by funding restrictions of its major cooperators. Interdiction work on Guam is critical and some major cargo sectors will not be inspected for brown tree snakes unless more secure funding is provided to WS. The build up of military on Guam due recent military actions in the Middle East has forced WS to look else where for facilities to house canines used for snake interdiction that were once an integral part of military bases on Guam. This need to find non-military facilities will place an added financial burden on the program.

Hawaii Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators; such as producers; private individuals; businesses; and other Federal, State, and Local government agencies who have a vested interest in the program. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.



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